

URGENT ACTION

JAILED BLOGGER ENDS HUNGER STRIKE

Imprisoned Vietnamese blogger Nguyen Van Hai, known as Dieu Cay or “the peasant’s pipe”, has ended his hunger strike after 38 days. An official visited him in prison and informed him that his complaint petition would be investigated. He is a prisoner of conscience serving a 12-year sentence.

On 27 July an official from Nghe An People’s Procuracy – the provincial office responsible for legal affairs and prosecutions – visited **Nguyen Van Hai** at Prison No 6, Thanh Chuong District in Nghe An province. He informed him that his complaint petition had been received and that it would be investigated. Nguyen Van Hai ended his hunger strike the same day.

Nguyen Van Hai’s family learnt that he had ended his hunger strike when they were allowed a seven minute meeting with him on 2 August at Prison No 6. He said that he was slowly eating again, appeared to be in better health and was pleased with the response finally received from the authorities.

Nguyen Van Hai had been on hunger strike since around 20 June in protest at the harsh treatment of himself and other political prisoners. He had been held in solitary confinement after he refused to confess to the alleged crimes for which he was sentenced to 12 years’ imprisonment in September 2012.

Nguyen Van Hai, 61, co-founded the Free Journalists Club in September 2007 and became one of Viet Nam’s most influential bloggers, writing on a wide variety of issues, including social injustice, human rights abuses, and national sovereignty. He was first arrested in April 2008, tried on politically-motivated charges of tax evasion and sentenced to two-and-a-half years in prison. Instead of being released at the end of his sentence in October 2010, he was held for investigation for “conducting propaganda” against the state under Article 88 of Viet Nam’s Penal Code.

During this extended detention period, his family and lawyer were frequently refused permission to visit him. He was eventually tried on 24 September 2012 and received a 12-year prison sentence with five years’ house arrest on release. In an appeal letter written shortly after his trial in September 2012, he wrote that he had undertaken a protest hunger strike in February 2011 which lasted until he was taken to hospital after 28 days on 6 March 2011.

Many thanks to all those who took action. No further action is required from the UA network. Amnesty International will continue to work on his case through other means.

This is the first update of UA 194/13. Further information: <http://amnesty.org/en/library/info/ASA41/005/2013/en>

Name: Nguyen Van Hai, also known as Dieu Cay
Gender m/f: m

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